

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9749

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 8974

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CGEN PFOR

SUBJ: EVANS-NOVAK STORY

REF: STATE 122771

1. I REGRET OF COURSE THAT CLASSIFIED EMBASSY TELEGRAMS (MOSCOW 6996, 7010, 7728, AND 8189) ABOUT CONSULAR PROBLEMS WERE APPARENTLY LEAKED TO EVANS AND NOVAK IN WASHINGTON. I PARTICULARLY REGRET THAT COLUMN MAY BE INTERPRETED AS SUGGESTING THAT REPORTING TELEGRAMS REFLECTED A NEW AND SPECIAL EXPRESSION BY ME, AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME, OF UNHAPPINESS OVER SOVIET INTRANSIGENCE ON CONSULAR AND HUMANITARIAN MATTERS. I AM DISTURBED NOW AS I WAS A YEAR AGO OVER THE POOR PERFORMANCE OF THE SOVIETS IN THESE AREAS. WHILE MILITIA DENIAL OF ACCESS TO EMBASSY, ETC. GETS SLIGHTLY BETTER AND WORSE CYCLICALLY, SOVIET CONDUCT IN THESE AREAS HAS BEEN GENERALLY CONSTANT. EMBASSY HAS SENT DOZENS OF TELEGRAMS ABOUT CONSULAR AND HUMANITARIAN MATTERS IN LAST YEARS, AND TELEGRAMS LEAKED TO EVANS AND NOVAK WERE A CONTINUATION OF THAT SERIES AND NOT SOMETHING MARKEDLY UNUSUAL.

2. FOR DEPT'S BACKGROUND INFORMATION EMBASSY OFFERS FOLLOWING COMMENTS ABOUT EVANS-NOVAK COLUMN.

3. EVANS-NOVAK CITE A "NEW" PATTERN OF INTENSIFYING
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MONITORING AND HARASSMENT OF SOVIET CITIZENS' ATTEMPTING TO

ENTER THE EMBASSY."

COMMENT: IN MOSCOW 7728, EMBASSY ONLY INDICATED THAT "IN PAST SEVERAL WEEKS THERE HAS EMERGED PATTERN. . . ." IN EMBASSY VIEW, PATTERN IS "NEW" ONLY IN TERMS OF A NARROW TIME-FRAME; IN FACT SOVIET AUTHORITIES HAVE TIGHTENED AND RELAXED EMBASSY ACCESS FROM MONTH TO MONTH FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS. (ACCESS PROBLEM WAS WORSE WHEN I WAS CONSUL HERE IN 1947.)

4. EVANS-NOVAK DECLARE THAT THE DEPARTMENT IS "AVOIDING

FOR NOW HIGH-LEVEL PRE-SUMMIT PROTESTS THAT MIGHT ENDANGER DETENTE."

COMMENT: EMBASSY AND SO FAR AS WE KNOW THE DEPT CONTINUE TO PROTEST ON VARIOUS LEVELS EVERY SIGNIFICANT INCIDENT WHICH OCCURS IN THE SOVIET UNION INVOLVING AMERICAN CITIZEN INTERESTS.

5. EVANS-NOVAK WRITE THAT "CLAMP-DOWN ON CONTACTS WITH THE US EMBASSY IS WORST EVER."

COMMENT: AGAIN, MOSCOW 7728 CONTRASTS CERTAIN EVENTS OF SEVERAL WEEKS IN APRIL AND EARLY MAY WITH DEVELOPMENTS OF SEVERAL PRECEDING MONTHS. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE CLAMP-DOWN IS NOT RPT NOT THE "WORST EVER" IN TERMS OF A BROADER TIME-FRAME SUCH AS THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS.

6. EVANS-NOVAK REFER TO "AN APPARENT STEP-UP" IN EXIT VISA REFUSALS.

COMMENT: WHILE THE TELEGRAM REPORTS SUCH A DEVELOPMENT, IT AGAIN HAS TO BE CONSIDERED AS DESCRIPTIVE OF A SEVERAL-WEEK PERIOD IN THE LATE SPRING IN WHICH THERE WAS INDEED A FLURRY OF EXIT VISA REFUSALS. OUR MESSAGE DID NOT PURPORT TO DESCRIBE "TRENDS" IN THE SOVIET EMIGRATION AREA, WHICH ARE OF COURSE UPWARD. IN FIRST FIVE MONTHS OF 1974-- JANUARY THROUGH MAY--WE PROCESSED 420 EMIGRANTS TO THE UNITED STATES (135 IMMIGRANT VISAS AND 285 TCP); IN THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS

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OF 1973 WE HAD PROCESSED 240 (88 IMMIGRANT AND 152 TCP) IN RECENT MONTHS A NUMBER OF REFUSALS HAVE COME TO OUR ATTENTION. HOWEVER, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE WITH MUCH PRECISION THE RATE OF REFUSAL OF SOVIET EXIT VISAS FOR PERSONS WISHING TO GO TO THE UNITED STATES BECAUSE WE DO NOT KNOW HOW MANY APPLIED TO THE SOVIET PASSPORT AUTHORITIES. WE REGRET TO NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT EXIT PERMISSION CONTINUES TO BE DENIED IN 11 CASES OF AMERICAN CITIZENS SEEKING REPATRIATION TO THE UNITED

STATES AND SOME 200 LONG-STANDING CLOSE FAMILY SEPARATION CASES IN WHICH THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS EXPRESSED OFFICIAL INTEREST TO THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT.

7. EVANS-NOVAK CITE THE EMBASSY REPORT THAT SOVIET OFFICIALS HAD REFUSED TO REGISTER A US-SOVIET MARRIAGE "FOR THE FIRST TIME IN RECENT MEMORY."

COMMENT: IN FACT, THE SOVIETS SOON REVERSED THEMSELVES IN THIS CASE, AND ALLOWED MISS MARGARET KNOX--THE VICTIM OF THE INITIAL REFUSAL--TO MARRY HER SOVIET FIANCE IN YEREVAN IN EARLY JUNE (MOSCOW 8658). THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN RELUCTANT TO PERMIT US-SOVIET MARRIAGES. WITH DETENTE MORE US-SOVIET COUPLES ARE ATTEMPTING TO GET PERMISSION TO MARRY AND MORE ARE MARRYING, BUT SOVIET OFFICIALDOM CONTINQBY TO RAISE CONTRIVED OBSTACLES-OFFICIAL SOVIET RESISTANCE TO SUCH MARRIAGES SEEMS GREATER THAN NECESSARY OR APPROPRIATE IN DETENTE ERA.

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